



# THE ISSUE OF CENTRAL ASIA IN EUROPEAN STATES

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the formation, development, and current activities of scientific research institutions on Central Asia in European countries. As a result of geopolitical interest that began in the 19th century, Central Asian studies emerged as a separate field of Oriental studies in Europe. The article discusses the scientific societies, expeditions, and modern scientific cooperation projects established in countries such as Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and France. Today, scientific activity in this direction continues between European and Central Asian countries through academic exchanges, joint research, and scientific publications.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Europe, oriental studies, research institutions, history, archeology, Russian Empire, Great Britain, Germany, scientific cooperation, expedition, oriental languages, scientific publications.

**Introduction.** The interest of European states in the Central Asian region dates back to a long historical past. In particular, the rivalry between the Russian Empire and the British Empire in the 19th century - a geopolitical struggle known in history as the "Great Game" - significantly increased scientific, military and economic attention to Central Asia. During this period, European states began to study this region not only as a strategic landscape, but also as a territory with a rich historical and cultural heritage.

From this period, special scientific expeditions were organized in various European countries to study Central Asia. For example, the British Empire sent agents through India to Afghanistan and the northern regions to collect geographical, demographic, and political information. Russia, along with military campaigns, organized scientific expeditions to Central Asia, paying great attention to mapping the region, collecting statistical information about the population, and studying cultural monuments.

**Main part:** This process gave impetus to the development of oriental studies in Europe. The study of Central Asia became a scientific direction for European scholars, not only academic, but also related to political and economic interests.

Since the mid-19th century, special scientific research institutions began to form in Europe to systematically conduct scientific research on Central Asia. These institutions mainly operated in the fields of history, geography, ethnography, archaeology, and linguistics. Each state established scientific centers in these areas in accordance with its political interests.

Russia, due to its direct proximity to Central Asia, paid special attention to the in-depth scientific study of this region. The Imperial Geographical Society (founded in 1845) in St. Petersburg served as the leading scientific center in this regard. The "Asian Department" of the society specialized in the study of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Siberia. Many expeditions sent by this society conducted scientific research in the territories of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.



Germany was distinguished by the strong development of the Orientalist school. In the 19th century, the University of Berlin and the Berlin Orientalist Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, founded in 1845) studied Central Asian historical sources, especially Persian-Tajik manuscripts. German scholars also studied ancient Turkic and Buddhist monuments through archaeological expeditions (for example, research in Dunhuang).

In Britain, the Royal Geographical Society became one of the leading scientific centers for Central Asia. The society provided access for researchers from northern India to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The scientific data collected there are now stored in London universities and museums.

In France, the National School of Oriental Languages and Cultures (École spéciale des langues orientales vivantes) was dedicated to the study of Central Asian languages and literatures. The numerous manuscripts and archival documents held in the Louvre Museum and the National Library in Paris are an important source of this scholarly research.

Thus, research institutions established in various parts of Europe extensively studied Central Asia not only from a historical and cultural perspective, but also from a geopolitical and economic perspective. These studies later led to the emergence of the Central Asian topic as an important area of study in European academic circles.

Research conducted by research centers established in Europe covered many areas. These developments created a rich scientific base of materials on the ancient civilizations, languages, ethnography, archaeological monuments, and historical figures of Central Asia.

**Results and discussions:** European scholars paid special attention to the study of Central Asian history, especially to the analysis of sources in ancient Turkic and Persian languages. Manuscripts of Arabic, Persian and Turkic historical works were studied, translated and published with commentaries. For example, the works of thinkers such as Abu Rayhan Beruni, Al-Khwarizmi, Ibn Sina were translated into French, English and German.

Linguists studied the languages of the peoples of Central Asia - Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and other nationalities, and wrote scientific articles about their grammatical structure, phonetic features and historical changes. The teaching of Turkic languages was introduced in European schools of oriental studies. This is especially evident in the work of German and Russian researchers.

European archaeologists, especially during expeditions to Central Asia in the early 20th century, studied ancient cities, temples, written sources, coins, and other examples of material culture. The archaeological ruins and monuments of ancient cities such as Khorezm, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Termez were at the center of these scientific developments.

These scientific developments not only deepened historical knowledge, but also served to eliminate stereotypes about Central Asia in Europe and to recognize this region as a crossroads of civilizations.

Since the second half of the 20th century, scientific relations between Europe and Central Asia have reached a new level. While cooperation with European countries was limited during the Soviet era, after independence, Central Asian countries - including Uzbekistan - established direct relations with scientific institutions in Europe. These relations continue to be active today.

Today, many scientific centers in Europe - universities in Germany, France, England, Italy, and other countries - are engaged in training specialists in Central Asia, conducting scientific research, and organizing joint expeditions.

For example:

- The Max Planck Institute (Germany) conducts special research on Central Asia in anthropology and history.
- SOAS University of London (UK) is a leading research center on the languages, cultures, and religious systems of Central Asia.
- INALCO (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, France) runs educational programs on the Uzbek language and culture. Many Uzbek scientists have the opportunity to conduct research internships in Europe. Programs such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe play an important role in this regard.

**Conclusion:** The Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, the National University of Uzbekistan, Samarkand State University and other scientific institutions are currently implementing joint projects with prestigious European institutions. In the archaeological field, joint excavations are being carried out at ancient monuments, especially in cooperation with Germany and France. For example, the Fayoztepa monument near Termez was studied in collaboration with French scientists.

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